

BUMEDINST 6400.3
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18 Jul 90

BUMED INSTRUCTION 6400.3

From: Chief, Bureau Medicine and Surgery
To: Ships and Stations Having Medical Department Personnel

Subj: USE AND SUPERVISION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING AND
TEST MATERIALS IN MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITIES

Ref: (a) BUMEDINST 6320.66

Encl: (1) Definitions
(2) Qualification Guidelines of Occupational Specialties
in Psychological Testing

1. Purpose. To identify a class of specialized psychological materials, and provide policy in the use, security, and supervision of psychological testing procedures in medical treatment facilities.

2. Background. Psychological tests and reports include sensitive and confidential information. The use of psychological tests requires specialized expertise to ensure valid information. The process of obtaining, recording, and reporting this information can in part be accomplished with the use of technicians and computers; but valid clinical application of test information to an individual case requires expert interpretation beyond the capability of technicians or computer programs. Without appropriate professional supervision or review, the uncritical acceptance of technician or computer-generated reports does not meet standards of quality patient care. Test materials must be kept secure to preserve their usefulness as tests.

3. Policy

a. The senior privileged clinical psychologist at each medical treatment facility is responsible for directing the use, security, and quality control of psychological test instruments in patient care. This task includes the responsibility to assess and make recommendations to the privileging authority of the medical treatment facility regarding privileging in psychological testing.

b. In reference (a) only doctoral level, licensed clinical psychologists are privileged as psychological test users as defined in enclosure (1) as part of their core privileges.

c. Psychological tests are administered, scored, and interpreted only in situations having the professional supervision and accountability of privileged practitioners. Qualification guidelines for occupational specialties typically involved in psychological testing are in enclosure (2).

d. Healthcare practitioners, other than psychologists, who wish to become psychological test users must demonstrate documented formal education, skill under supervision, and working knowledge of both test measurement principles and the literature relevant to the tests employed. Their credentials will be reviewed by the senior privileged clinical psychologist who will recommend whether or not to grant privileges for use of specific psychological tests to the privileging authority.

e. Psychological test users will adhere to the professional requirements set forth in the publications of the American Psychological Association entitled "Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests" and the "Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by Clinical, Counseling, Industrial and School Psychologists." Demonstration of familiarity with these standards must be one of the criteria for privileging nonpsychologist healthcare practitioners as psychological test users.

f. Nonadherence to the policies and procedures of this instruction may jeopardize medical, legal, and administrative actions based on or supported by test results.

4. Procedures

a. Proper use and security of psychological tests (including those administered by computers), resulting data, and reports are ensured when test instruments, methodology, materials, and equipment are:

(1) Available only to persons with professional interests who safeguard their use and security.

(2) Secured under locked storage when not in use.

(3) Not described or displayed to others in ways that might invalidate test technique or results.

(4) Disposed of when no longer usable.

b. Acquired raw test data, test scores, and user aid documents (i.e., test answer sheets, profile sheets, score summaries, computer generated reports, or inference notes) are:

(1) Ordinarily released only to persons who are qualified to interpret and use them properly, and such release is closely supervised by a practitioner privileged in psychological testing.

(2) To be reported in official medical records or administrative or legal correspondence only with technical guidance, review, and approval of a practitioner privileged in psychological testing.

(3) Maintained and disposed of following appropriate medical record instructions.

c. Computerized psychological test administration, scoring, and reporting require the documented review and approval of a practitioner privileged in psychological testing.

d. Local procedures may be established to promote general familiarity and appreciation of psychological test usage in clinical and consultative services, medical education and training, and clinical investigation. These procedures are subject to approval by the senior clinical psychologist at the facility.

e. Further guidance regarding instances not included in this instruction should be obtained from the Specialty Advisor for Clinical Psychology.

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DEFINITIONS

1. Psychological Test. Any standardized and published assessment procedure which is administered under standardized conditions. Tests are designed and used for understanding and diagnosing the nature and causes of, and for predicting and reducing the following effects of mental disorder or disturbance and physical disease or disability, subjective distress, individual impairment, and psychological and emotional factors.

a. These tests include those focusing on the following psychological functions: cognitive and intellectual abilities, emotions, personality characteristics, neuropsychological functioning, or academic skills and educational achievement.

b. The following added criteria are given to aid in identifying a procedure as being a psychological test within the scope of this instruction. The test has been:

(1) Involved in appellate decisions of the courts of the United States, or in the decisions of their administrative agencies, both Federal and State, that define the admissibility of psychologists' test results.

(2) Developed by psychologists applying principles and procedures of the science of psychology in test construction.

(3) Routinely evaluated in publications authored by psychologists in recognized clinical, counseling, or consulting psychology or medical literature.

(4) Listed or reviewed in authoritative references either of psychological testing and evaluation or of mental measurements.

(5) Obtained from vendors making known that sale is made in adherence to the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association.

c. Some specific examples of the types of tests covered are: Rorschach, the various Wechsler Intelligence Scales, Halstead-Reitan Battery, Luria-Nebraska Battery, Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, etc.

d. The following types of procedures are excluded from the scope and intent of the "psychological test" definition of this instruction:

(1) Surveys and questionnaire formats used in measuring group attitudes and interests.

(2) Surveys and questionnaire formats administered for purposes of assessing an individual patient's social relationship (i.e., marital, family) or pediatric developmental milestones and schedules.

(3) Instruments solely measuring occupational interest of choice, role or skill performance, and vocational adaptation.

(4) Any test, rating index, or scale routinely used by medical practitioners in the evaluation of clinical state and mental examination such as: Glasgow Coma Scale, Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test, Mini-Mental Status Examination, Beck Depression Inventory, or Reitan-Indiana Aphasia Screening Test.

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(5) Questionnaires, inventories, or checklists used to elicit general historical information from a patient.

(6) Any instrument specifically developed for use by medical practitioners in medical research.

2. Standardized Test. A test in which the procedure, apparatus, and scoring have been fixed so that precisely the same testing procedures can be followed at different times and places. Standardization implies uniformity of procedure in administering and scoring the test. Detailed directions are given which include exact materials employed, time limits, oral instructions, and other details in the testing situation. Standardized tests also have norms without which scores cannot be interpreted.

3. Test Administration. Orally, manually, or electronically giving a test, or portion thereof, to individuals following standard or altered method and instruction.

4. Test User. Individual who chooses, administers, or interprets tests. A competent user has a combination of knowledge of psychometric principles and knowledge of the problem situation in which the testing is to be done. Test user does not mean one who uses information from an approved test report.

QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES OF OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES
IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

1. Military and Department of the Navy civilian psychologists who are eligible candidates for full clinical privileges in psychological testing include:

a. Military officer personnel possessing the subspecialty code of clinical psychologist (NOBC 0851).

b. Department of the Navy doctoral level, licensed civilian personnel who function in, and have been appraised as qualifying to perform psychological evaluations in, the positions of:

(1) Clinical psychologist (series 180, GS-11 and above).

(2) Counseling psychologist (series 180, GS-11 and above).

2. Other military and Department of the Navy civilian healthcare practitioners, not psychologists, who have successfully displayed technical competence in psychological testing and have been granted privileges to use specific psychological tests.

3. Department of the Navy civilian personnel who function in psychologist positions (series 180, GS-09 and above) may be involved in the following testing activities only in consultation with a practitioner privileged in psychological testing. These personnel may:

a. Administer and score psychological tests.

b. Make preliminary interpretations of the test data validity.

c. Evaluate patterns revealed by psychological tests.

4. After an appropriate period of training, the following personnel may be used for psychological test administration and scoring performed under the supervision of a practitioner privileged in psychological testing. These individuals are not permitted to make test interpretations.

a. Military enlisted personnel with the military occupational specialty of psychiatric technician (NEC 8485).

b. Department of the Navy civilian personnel who qualify to function in psychology aide positions (series 181, GS-04) or psychology technician positions (series 181, GS-05 through GS-09).